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*The MINOR
POET to his
MUSE—*

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*If it is true thou hast
a Secret Book
In which are treasured
all the thoughts of men
Who find in thee and in
thy loving look
The inspiration for a
fruitful pen,*

*Then thou hast those I
fashioned from my
heart,
Impressions made up-
on my mobile youth
By thy strange beauty
and elusive art,
The lyrics of a pure and
passional truth.*

*But in succeeding years
thou didst forget,
And favored fairer Poets,
while I fain
Would still go singing on,
remembering yet
Though lute and harp
were set to sadder strain.*

*Thy beauty hath been
sung in greater song
Than any said and signed
by my poor name,
And in thy little Secret
Book belong
The tributes of men high
in halls of fame.*

*But with dim eyes, on
some sweet pensive day,
Thou'lt leaf them o'er,
and ere is closed the
cover*

*Wilt sigh across dead
years to me and say,
He was my constant, my
most faithful lover.*

SONGS & SONNETS

by

Elizabeth Colwell



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Frederic Fairchild Sherman

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To my Mother

The BALLAD of a YOUTH

I

*I am not fair as she
is fair,
With a white spirit's
grace;
Nor can I that fine
fervor wear
That looks forth from
her face.*

*I am not pure as she
is pure ~
Strange phantoms did
invite,
And curious whispers
came to lure
My footsteps through
the Night.*

*And now I can but know
that when
Her feet the lilies trod,
I sought the hidden
haunts of men
And so forgot my God.*

*Where smiles are bought
with price of gold,
Where Love is painted Sin,
Where Youth grows wan
and weak and old,
I knocked and entered in.*

*From Circe's mad en-
chanted cup,
The wine I quickly quaff'd.
I tossed the golden
Goblet up,
And drank deep of the
draught.*

*Ofttimes the stars paled
in the sky,
And glowed the roseate East,
And whisperings of the
day drew nigh,
When home from some
late feast*

*Where languorous eyes
and ready lips
Had proffered all their
sweet~
As o'er-ripe honeycomb
oft drips~
I brought reluctant
feet.*

II

I

*She dwelt among the
meads and downs
With Sun and Moon
and Sea,
Far from the hot and
aching Towns,
Where man holds com-
pany.*

*She saw how each re-
turning Spring
Made little rivulets run
And quicken to mad
murmuring
And laughter in the
Sun.*

*She heard the thunder-
heads unroll
And fold away the mist,
That every bud and
bloom and knoll
By rainbow might be
kissed.*

*A silver sickle in the
sky,
She saw the slender
Moon,
And from the limpid
light hung high,
She craved a silent boon.*

*She saw the Autumn
burn to gold,
Dream on to certain
death
When Winter in his
mantle's fold
Crushed out her quiet
breath.*

II

*The ripple of the rising
lark,
His poignant prophesy
In sprays of song through
dewy dark
Stirred her with melody,*

*And through long, list-
less days of June,
And full, Midsummer's
heat,
She sighed and sang in
tender tune,
Ripe, like the Season's
wheat.*

III

*White robe about white
limbs so fair,
She wound and then
her head
Bent low in simple,
silent prayer,
Before her fragrant
bed.*

*Half-parted lips and red
rose blush,
Shy thrills of ecstasy,
Wide open eyes on mid-
night hush,
Thus did she dream of
me.*

III

*Through changing, crimson sunset skies,
My undeliberate pace
Found her with wistful,
wondering eyes;
And strange, moon-haunted face.*

*Tall, like her flag-flowers
in the marsh,
Lithe, like a lily, blown
By breezes ere they grow
too harsh
And o'er the moors make
moan.*

*Her smile was like the
April sun;
Her laugh like silvery rain,
Which ere it died away
had run
Straight through my heart
with pain.*

*She said—her voice was
as a song—
“Ah, thou hast come to me!
I have been waiting for
thee long,
Down by the sounding
Sea.”*

*She said: “And thou hast
come from far,
From some strange, un-
known place;
With dust and stain thy
garments are,
And tears have soiled
thy face.”*

*“Come let me give thee
from my store
Of honey and of meat;
A cup of water drink
before
Thou perish in the heat.”*

*"A cool, clean garment
shalt thou wear—
Ah, let me dry thy tears!
My home and harvest
shalt thou share
Through the succeeding
years."*

*She took my tired head
to rest
As if she did but know
I found the haven of
her breast
By stumbling steps and
slow.*

IV

*I am not fair as she
is fair,
With a white spirit's
grace;
Nor can I that fine fer-
vor wear
That looks forth from
her face.*

*I am not pure as she
is pure ~
Strange phantoms did
invite,
And curious whispers
came to lure
My footsteps through
the Night.*

*Rich bounty from the
perfect fount
Of her virginity,
And passion's pity par-
amount,
She holds in leash for
me.*

*And for this fragrant
chalice, chaste,
I can but offer her
Experience, touched
with the taste
Of wormwood and of
myrrh.*

*It is not that I would
be free
For that I love her well.
And yet it is her
Purity
Makes me my Heaven
and Hell.*

I Looked Within a Full-blown Rose

*I looked within a full-
blown Rose,
And found a drop of
dew.
Fold upon fold of vel-
vet leaf,
Hid it from passing
view.*

*I looked within your
Heart, my Dear,
The petals were close
curled;
All patiently I loosed
each leaf,
What wealth to me
unfurled!*

A LAMENT

*A happy, happy bird
Sits singing in a tree.
The little song he sings
Can only be for me.*

*He seems to know
my heart
Is aching here alone,
I hear it in his glad,
As in his plaintive
tone.*

*He has his little Love
All warm within her
nest,
And I-I have a dream
To fold unto my breast.*

*Hark, how the bubbling
notes
His feathered throat
dilate!
He seems to say to me:
"O wait, O wait, O wait!"*

*So there he sits and
sings
Up in the greenwood
tree;
O, if my Love should
hear,
Should hear, and come
to me!*

The WAY of LIFE

*O, the way of life goes
strangely, but let not
our hearts grow old,
Though we leave the
lanes of childhood, miss
the arms that used to
fold.*

*While the bloom is on
the hillside, and the
hedges full of song,
Look a little, love a lit-
tle, for the way will
not be long.*

*O, the tears will come
to blind us, but we al-
ways smile again,
And we love the sun
the better after days
of cloud and rain.*

*While we have the lit-
tle children, and the
fields to roam among,
Look a little, love a lit-
tle, for the way will
not be long.*

*There are blossoms
by the roadside, and
enough for one and all,
And their fragrance
is no sweeter for the
great than for the
small.*

*Then but listen to
their greetings, leave
awhile the busy throng,
Look a little, love a lit-
tle, for the way will
not be long.*

The Difference

*Ah, yesterday the
song I heard,
Of a wild, wanton, hap-
py bird,
Brought tears of an-
guish to my eyes,
To think of my 'lost
Paradise.*

*But how my heart
leaps up today,
To join him in his
roundelay!
His song is sweet, as
sweet can be,
Because my Love's re-
turned to me.*

EAST & WEST

*O, to ride East,
In the early morn,
Hope high in the heart
For the day, new-born!*

*O, to ride West,
The day's work done,
The sky all aglow
With the setting sun!*

*O, to ride East,
O, to ride West,
O, ever to ride
With one I love best!*

LIKE HER

*Not hers the beauty
which the violet holds-
Returning Spring's
sweet, welcome har-
binger-*

*Nor does the splendid
pageant that unfolds
O'er meadow-land and
hill, resemble her.*

*Nor yet the fullness
of the Summertime,
The long hushed days,
the fresh night-cooling
showers,
The lilies bending where
the ripples hide
Their drowsy murmur
in deep-perfumed
bowers.*

*But more like her
the time the soft south
breeze*

*Brings mellow notes of
gleaners in the corn.*

*When purplish lights
come shimmering
through the trees,
And memories quick-
ening, pensive thoughts
are born.*

VAGRANTS

*Hawthorn and sweet-
brier, apple leaf and
rose,
Dandelions matching
fire with the cowslip
glows,*

*Scent of the new grass,
wind-blown and sweet,
Call down the long pass
unreluctant feet.*

*Wild on the hillside
grow the sweet peas;
Deep in their fragrance
hide the ardent bees.*

*On with a sly slip, lur-
ing us after,
Ripple and dip, dip,
goes the creek's laughter.*

*Oriole, cardinal, thrush's
wild note;
Blackbird's madrigal
low in the throat.*

*Lark's love madness
upward he flings,
Soars in his gladness,
sings, soars, sings.*

*Swift shafts of sun-
light drink up the dew.
Yonder a crow's flight
quicken the view.*

*On, on, the woods bring
more enticing ways;
On, on, the birds sing
more melodious lays.*

*On, on, the creek calls
till it is a rill,
Gurgling where the trail
falls high from a hill.*

*On, on, the trail leads;
who would have it end?
The fairest flower
must needs be just
around a bend.*

*On, ere the June dust
mars the bloom of
May,
Let us wander, dear,
just vagrants for a
day!*

UNSUNG~

*How often I feel that
the madcap reel
Of a ship on a tossing
sea,
Where the winds hiss
low, and the foam flecks
blow,
Would be life of a kind
for me.*

*I would meet the sway,
and the dashing spray
From the waves with a
hungering glee;
And the tears unshed,
and the heart that hath
bled,
Would be lost in the sob
of the sea.*

*But here, only here, is
the caroling clear,
Of a bird in a blossom-
ing tree:*

*A song in his breast,
to his mate on her
nest,
He pours forth his
ripe melody.*

*I wish not to rue that
the skies are still blue,
That the clover is deep
in the lea;
But to be like a bird
with my song all un-
heard,
And the memory, Sweet,
of thee!*

A LETTER from the COUNTRY

*I am down in the sun-
lit meadows,
That smell of the new-
mown hay;
The world is the color
of clover,
And decked for a holi-
day.*

*The lark calls down
to the blossoms,
But his message is not
more sweet,
Than I send with the
zephyrs that rustle
The grasses that grow
at my feet.*

*They dip from the
blue of the heavens,
And gather the drops
of dew,
That hide in the hearts
of the lilies,
And take them, my
kisses, to you.*

MEMORIES

I

*I wonder, now, if you
remember, dear,
Those first few days I
walked alone with you;
When buds and blossoms
of the glad, new year,
Tangled the byways
that we wandered
through.*

II

*You reached the sprays
that brushed against
my face,
Laughing to see me in
a perfumed bower;
You caught the thorns
that tangled in my lace,
Hidden in honeyed
sweets of hawthorn
flower.*

III

*And where the sun
shone through the rifts
of blue,
Down dim cool path-
ways by the moss-girt
trees,
We sought the meadow
where the violets grew,
And plucked gay clus-
ters in the wind-swept
leas.*

IV

*Remember how we
talked of Love and
Art,
Pledging ourselves to
Beauty; at her feet
To lay Life's largess,
and upon her heart
Of our twin souls the
sacrifice complete.*

*Ah, well! How could
we know — how could
we know?*

*Today a robin calls
and yet — and yet —
It seems a heartache in
his dumb breast — O,
And o'er these violets
here, mine eyes are
wet!*

TO PHYLLIS

Would I were a little
bird,
In the early morn,
Singing at thy win-
dow, Sweet,
As the day is born.

I would sing thee of
the dew,
And the roses' blush,
Hidden perfumes wak-
ening
With the Dawn's first
flush.

As the East began to
glow,
I would sing to thee
Love notes dropped
from Paradise,
Purest melody.

*Thou wouldst waken
from thy dreams
Like an opening flower,
Tossing back thy long,
fair hair
In a golden shower.*

*Out into the fragrant
morn
Would I woo thy feet,
Soaring, circling o'er
thy head,
Singing to thee, Sweet.*

*Happy, happy all the
day,
High in some great
tree
I would swing upon a
bough,
Learning songs for
thee.*

*Then when Night her
curtains drew,
I would seek thy nest
Sit without thy win-
dow, Sweet,
And sing thee to thy
rest.*

VOICES—

I

O what we two know!
Showers of song in
Spring;
Bird-notes blossoming,
First warm days that
bring
Feathered throats to
sing—
Rounding, ring on ring,
What we feel to fling,
Fail for want of wing—
Joy in everything!
Sweet, is it not so?

II

*O what we two know!
Autumn sunset flare;
When, quite unaware,
In a moment, rare,
Soul to soul is bare,
Spirits spirit share,
As a tender air
Delicately fair
Lingers — and then,
where?
Sweet, is it not so?*

In ARCADY

*Where the summer
shine
Woos the columbine~
Where the bees hum
over
Fresh and fragrant
clover~
Comes she on swift
feet,
Comes my own, my
Sweet.*

*Dewdrops on the vine
Glint like sunny brine;
From some secret
cover
Birds about her hover;
Dipping down to greet
Her, flashing, light
and fleet.*

*Careless of design,
Roses she doth twine;
Tilts her head, more-
over,
As her own approver.
Ah, but Earth is sweet,
When Maid and Morn-
ing meet!*

*Grace of curve and
line,
Soon shall she be mine,
Soon shall she discover,
Waiting her, her lover.
Ah, but Earth is sweet,
When Man and Maid-
en meet!*

QUATRAINS

I

*The smiles that light
my Lady's face
Are those of Love's
compassionate grace;
Her voice is as the sing-
ing sea,
When it is gliding tran-
quilly.*

II

*And all the tears that
dim her eyes
Are but the pearls of
Paradise,
Held, like the dew, in
lily-cups,
Till Love, the Sun, their
honey sups.*

III

*It fills me with a sweet
distress,
The whisper of her silk-
en dress,
As when, moved by
some gentle breeze,
The leaves stir on the
poplar trees.*

IV

*The mystic beauty of
her face
Above the folds of filmy
lace,
Holds all the wonder
of the world
Since Time his magic
scroll unfurled.*

*But O, the glory manifold,
The depths her burnished hair doth hold;
The glint of gold and gladness there,
The perfumed twilight
of her hair!*

Fulfillment

*Bud of a bright, crimson rose,
Is but the promise of
flower;
Love we the blossom
that blows,
Though it shall live
but an hour.*

*Born for a moment
that's fleet,
Winged on the waves
from above,
Touch of you, taste of
you, Sweet,
Are but the flower
of my love.*

Uncertainty

I

*When I look out across
the Sea,
I fear to think I may
not sail
My Bark safe through
the foam and gale,
Though now it glides
so tranquilly.*

II

*When I look backward
o'er the Land,
Long, lonely wastes be-
hind me lie;
And there a Forest
reaches high,
With depths unsearched
by human hand.*

III

*When I look up there
is the Sky,
But O, it seems so far
to God!
When I look down there
is the Sod—
O, Brother, what, and
where am I?*

Ab INITIO

*Night~breezes sigh,
and the moon is high,
Love is a wonderful
mystery!*

*'Neath star-strewn skies
the blue lake lies,
Love is a wonderful
mystery!*

*The shy waves slip
with a lyric dip,
Love is a wonderful
mystery!*

*Where willows weep, the
lilies sleep,
Love is a wonderful
mystery!*

*A whip-poor-will calls,
a red rose falls,
Love is a wonderful
mystery!
Its velvet scent to the
air is lent,
Love is a wonderful
mystery!*

*A lad and lass in the
dew-dipped grass,
Love is a wonderful
mystery!
With whispered breath
plight Love till death,
Love is a wonderful
mystery!*

On the BEACH

*Blue of the sea, and
blue of the sky,
White, of the white
clouds floating by.
Sweep of a sea-gull
dipping low;
Odors of intimate
winds that blow.*

*Playing like children
in warm, white sands,
Lifted and sifted
through listless hands,
This drowsy day, Love,
you and I,
Watching the blue of
the sea and the sky,
And the great white
cloud-ships floating by.*

Sonnets

LEONARDO da
VINCI on paint-
ing the MONA
LISA~

*My easel, palette, brush-
es, knife; there lie
The tubes of paint; there
stands the canvas, white,
All waiting in the dim, un-
certain light
Of early dawn. Today
what shall I try?
For I am pregnant with
great work, and my
Trained hand is cunning
to obey the might
Of my completest know-
ledge, and the sight
That penetrates beneath
what all pass by.*

*So I shall paint a face-
a woman's face.*

*And that strange light
that shines forth from
her eyes*

*Shall lure all men to her
their souls to trace.*

*And passion, love and
pity, all that lies*

*Within the heart, about
the lips shall play.*

*And men shall marvel at
us both alway.*

MIDSUMMER NIGHT~

*Soft is the Summernight.
Scarcely a breeze
Sways the long grasses, or
stirs where they stand
Tall, silent shadows, the
slim poplar trees.
A ray of light floods o'er
the trembling land
As yon full moon breaks
from a fleecy cloud
A moment ere'tis caught
again and all
Is veiled in a soft, myster-
ious shroud.
The senses droop, held
in the mystic thrall.*

*Such times I feel thee
nearest me, Dear Heart.
This calm, this hush, when
Nature draws the soul
To commune with itself—
though far apart,
Though league on league
between us doth unroll—
Brings thee but closer
in that realm of Song,
Where Love and Love's ex-
pression most belong.*

I DO NOT BLAME THEE

*I do not blame thee, Dear,
for it is mine
By nature to encircle
thy fair fame,
And hover near thee,
whilst thou dost design
For me as purposely as
the white flame
The moth. Yon star
that gleams so bright
and fine
Knows not that Poets
write and wreath its
name
In lyric loveliness, and
its pure shine
Is steadfast though
to praise it knows no
claim.*

*I say I will not suffer
that I will not care
And yet Dear Heart
when in the dusk I sit,
As twilight falls and heav-
en's lamps are lit,
I breathe thy name upon
the evening air
Just as a child lisps one
word o'er and o'er
And finds it sweet, and
cares not to say more.*

MOODS~

*Let there be flowers in
plenty on my grave.
Let there be purple, for
those darker moods
When Earth seems all too
sad-when the soul broods
And doubts, and wonders
be there Powers that
save.*

*Let there be brighter
spots of gold and blue
For gayer moments, when
in ecstasy
The heart leaps up, and
madcap revelry
Joins hands with me to
chase the glad hours
through.*

*Let there be white,
pure white my love
for thee
Set in a crimson glow
to mean my heart.
Mayhap the wander-
ing wind will stoop to
part
The slender blossoms,
thus remembering
me,
Or little children idly
wandering there
May pluck them and
say, Mother, see how
fair!*

Inscription in Palgrave's Golden Treasury

*When my soul's ear
is deaf to beauteous
sound,
My inner eye heeds not
sweet things that pass—
The lark, song-lifting
from the dew-drenched
ground,
The slant of shadows
on the moon-lit grass—
When no more loiter-
ing by some blossoming
mound,
Forgotten sands sift idly
through the glass;
Or dreaming, I drift
slowly, outward bound,
With billowy clouds
that sail and form and
mass—*

*Ah then, within the
covers of this Book,
Where I have lived
the rapture and the
pain
Of those for whom
the Muse hath not in
vain
Called so alluringly,
let me not look!
Here where Pan pipes
and Eros sportive
plays,
Will be the wraith of
unremembered days.*

ONE LOVE~

*Thy love is like yon
shining, silver star,
Steadfast, beneath the
sceptre Dian wields;
Whose white beams beck-
on to me from afar,
To call my straying steps
from foreign fields.
What though I come all
halting, with the scars
Of worldliness, to which
my spirit yields!
When weakened by the
ways that maim and
mar,
Swifter I seek thee, and
thy spirit shields*

*Me, yea, and stooping
low I humbly drink
From thy deep wells of
human sympathy.
Not that I Lethe-ward
my soul may sink
Do I come contrite; and
I go from thee
Straightened and strength-
ened, as a man remade,
To meet his life, and
meet it unafraid.*

ANOTHER

*Thy love is of the subtle
Sybarite,
The lure of pleasure in
thy languorous eyes;
As some sweet-breathed
and scented Summer
night
Woos one with mystery
and warm surprise.
Aeons ago thou madst
of Antony's might
A broken stem. I sev-
ered sacred ties,
And of my white-browed
youth gave thee the
plight,
Nor knew thee false,
nor dreamed of thy dis-
guise.*

*Thy ways are wicked,
though thy smile serene;
So say I, while the quick,
intaken breath,
Betrays known days and
nights in Love's demesne;
Remembered until mem-
ory fades in death.
Ah, he who artless strays
into thy snare
Will, in or out, have for
his friend, Despair!*

My LARES and PENATES

*My Lares and Penates
are not such
As need the erstwhile
necessary van,
When from the uninspir-
ing fatal clutch
Of things familiar, I
make haste to plan
Wider horizons. For I
have not much:
Some Hiroshige's, brought
from old Japan,
A few choice things, sa-
cred to eye and touch;
My Mother, pictured
ere the encircling span*

*Of sorrowing years
had marred the girlish
bloom;*

*A rose-jar, fragrant, and
my books, to throw
The glow of intimacy
o'er my room.*

*With these companions
I can say, What though
I live three-storied, I'm
windowed to the East,
Upon Olympus dwell,
and with the Gods hold
feast!*

In SEASON

*It would not seem so
strange to say good-
bye,*

*If you were going when
the leaves are low,
When in long lines a-
gainst the smoke-hued
sky*

*The choristers of Sum-
mer's concert go.*

*For then the grass, sun-
scorched upon the hill,
Dry clings to earth
where thick, dust-breezes
blow,*

*And tall reeds gather
cobwebs by the rill;
If you went then, I
would not miss you so.*

*But now~now is the
time when bush and
tree
Have hidden, each with-
in its blossoming heart,
Far richer madrigals
than minstrelsy
Of all the rhymers in
the lyric art.
Now is that treasure-
time when you and I,
Should love and list, and
let the hours glide by.*

The VALLEY of DELIGHT

*Dear Heart, I dreamed
one night that you and
I
Were children in the
Valley of Delight;
I was a Maiden, slender,
fair and shy,
You were my gallant
Lord and trusty Knight.
We plucked a garland
fair—the month was
May—
Of hawthorn and the
graceful eglantine,
Fashioned with love and
laughter, so one day
The golden thread of Life
we hoped to twine.*

*But by some subtle
Presence that we knew
Potent and mystic,
though unheard, un-
seen,
Our way was guided
from the happy green,
From sun-swept mead-
ows where the lilies
blew,
To lonely paths with
few glad days to bless,
Leading to that high
hill, where dwells
Success.*

The ARTIST

*I, too, have known that
inner stir of things
Which binds me one
with my primeval race;
What time with singing
mouths and quickening
wings
The feathered harbin-
gers of June retrace
Our northern byways
with returning Springs;
And laden hawthorn
boughs so interlace,
Their shady fragrances
make coverings
For lovers to hide there
a trysting place.*

*Imaginative tracings
of the brain,
High character of
Poesy and Art,
May hold me in their
fascinating train
While I their symbols
place upon my chart.
But when sweet May
comes! Ah, upon such
days
My heart is moved in
strangely human ways.*

Compensation

*Perchance in after
years someone may say—
When I am sleeping where
the grasses grow,
And where the wild
wind wafts the breath
of May,
Or later brings the chill
of Winter's snow—
Someone may read my
little sheaf of songs
And say in thoughtful
musing, Ah, poor child,
She loved not wisely!
How the cruel thongs
Of Love, impassioned,
tore her heart, so mild!*

*But O, Beloved, let
them know that we
Have known such joy
within a garden close,
As sings and sobs and
sings, in ecstasy,
The Nightingale unto
his Love, the Rose.
And that I welcomed
Night's encircling gloom,
And clasped Love's
thorns to have Love's
perfect bloom.*

L'ENVOI—

*I am tired—so tired
tonight,
Let me lay my head
on thy breast;
Long since has faded
the light,
I am weary and want
to rest.*

*The way has been long
— so long,
Let me lay my head
on thy breast,
The linnet has ceased
his song,
I am weary and want
to rest.*

*Here endeth SONGS & SON-
NETS as written, lettered &
made into a book by Elizabeth
Colwell for Frederic Fairchild
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1909. Two hundred & fifty
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